

HELLO FRIENDS!



Take a look at the nearest map of the Atlantic Ocean. Look at that vast body of water that separates Africa from South America. See anything there? At first glance, you just see a lot of blue water, huh? But if you take a closer look, you'll see a small little island about 1,900 km from the west coast of Africa called Saint Helena Island. My name is Jeremy. I was born on Saint Helena and have lived here all my life! I heard you're learning about our island, and I am happy to tell you a little more about this place.

If you see pictures of St. Helena, you probably won't think too much of the landscape. There



St Helena is situated in the South Atlantic Ocean, 1,200 miles (1,950km) from the south-west coast of Africa, and 1,800 miles (2,900km) from the coast of South America.

aren't any extremely high peaks anywhere nearby. Our highest peak is Diana's Peak, which is only about 820 m (2,680 ft) tall. That's less than one-tenth the height of Mount Everest! You'll see many jagged peaks dominating the coastline of the island and extremely steep, rocky cliffs overlooking the shore. You can't see any really high peaks because we're actually standing on top of a gigantic volcano! From top to bottom, this volcano measures 4,220 m (14,000 ft), reaching all the way to the bottom of the ocean floor. So, you can't just consider what's above the water because there's a whole other world of St. Helena in the deep ocean. In fact, the total volume of the volcano is about 20 times that of Europe's largest volcano, Mt. Etna.

Although we're on top of a huge volcano, we haven't had any kind of eruption in six million years. Geologists in the area say that they think most of the rock on St. Helena came from the volcanic eruptions of two volcanoes on opposite sides of the island – one on Flagstaff Hill in the north, and the other in Sandy Bay Valley in the south. This, of course, happened millions of years ago.

The island is very small! We only have about 7,000 residents here, and that's probably because the land itself is pretty compact. The island is only about 17 km (10.5 miles) long and 10.5 km (6.5 miles) wide. And like I said before, we're pretty



View of St. Helena Island from above.

<http://landtrust.org/PhotoAlbum/LittleTraverseConservancyP/StHelenaAerial.jpg.JPG.html>

much in the middle of nowhere. Back when I was younger, I used to fantasize about being a long distance swimmer and swimming out to the next island. Once I found out that the next closest land was over 100 km (62 miles) to the northwest (Ascension Island), I quickly gave up on that dream. Most people arrive at our island by way of the one airport near our capital city – Jamestown.

Coastal areas of our islands are different from the middle parts of the land. The interior of St. Helena isn't barren. It's full of vegetation, and there's a pretty good variety of different ecosystems – forests, grasslands and even a few valleys where there are streams of running water. There are even a few spots where the land is flat, such as Francis Plain. These areas of flat land are sometimes right next to steep cliffs that are up to 300 m (984 ft) high. I've done quite a bit of exploring; including climbing some treacherous, steep cliffs. People who visit us all have different opinions of the island. One lady said it was the harshest and most barren place she'd ever been to, and one man said it was beautiful and green. Another lady just said she was confused! I think you have to see the entire island to make a fair judgment.

As for my family, we live in Jamestown, which is right in the middle of James Valley. Our island is pretty dry for the most part, and the climate is pretty mild. Even on this small island there is a difference in climates as you go from our town to Longwood, a town at higher elevations in the east.

Speaking of Longwood, a tourist never leaves without visiting our most famous point of interest – a prison cell in this small town where Napoleon was held captive for six years until his death in 1821. Napoleon was a great French general who was eventually defeated after nearly conquering all of Europe! I think my family and I go to this landmark at least once a year, and my brother Eric works there as a tour guide. Our island was also used as a holding place for prisoners of war. After all, there's nowhere to escape to on this island!

Other places that tourists enjoy are Castle Rock and “the Barn,” two jagged peaks on the coastline of St. Helena. There are also farms on the hillsides, as well as flax plantations. If you don't know, flax is a type of flower that is made into textile fibers. And just in case you ever decide to visit in the future, don't worry about any kind of language barrier -- English is the official language here since we're part of the British Commonwealth!

See you soon,
Jeremy Stevens
16°S 6°W



Jamestown, St. Helena Island. St. Helena, with no airport, is one of the most isolated places on earth. The town of Jamestown has a long history but looks like it's grown all it can.

<http://mborsuk01.home.comcast.net/mhb/travel/rio-mom/page2/>